Monday, November 9, 2009
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(ST. LOUIS) -- Returning home from Washington, DC, Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3) was greeted at the airport by health care providers, consumers, small business owners, seniors, and other health care supporters, thanking him for voting for health insurance legislation that controls costs, provides choice and competition, emphasizes wellness, prevention and shared responsibility, and puts patients and doctors back in charge of health care.

On Saturday, Carnahan was part of a bipartisan majority in the House of Representative who voted to pass the Affordable Health Care for America Act, sweeping health insurance reform legislation that will lower the costs of health care for all Americans without adding one dime to the deficit.

Upon returning to St. Louis, Carnahan held a press conference to highlight how the House-approved legislation will help people in Missouri and across the country, and to urge the U.S. Senate to act quickly on their own health care legislation so that a bill can be signed into law before the end of the year.

"**Momentum is on the side of the American people,**" said Carnahan**.** **"We have never been so close to putting quality, affordable health insurance within reach of all Americans."**

Joining Carnahan at today's press conference were:

   -   **Fritzi Lainoff,** a 79 year-old lung cancer survivor who has resorted to cutting back on her medication. Fritzi can't keep up with prescription drug costs which are not covered by Medicare because she falls in the "donut hole," a gap in coverage that affects almost 100,000 Missouri seniors.

The House-approved health care bill would immediately begin closing this coverage gap, would cut the cost of many drugs by 50%, and would empower the federal government to negotiate savings on drug prices.

- **Karen Handleman**, a small-business owner who believes providing health coverage for her employees is the right thing to do. Despite exhaustive searches for affordable options, Karen has seen double-digit increases in insurance costs for her employees, including nearly 25% this year alone.

The House-approved health care bill will provide small businesses with one-stop comparison shopping for a plan that offers the same kinds of low-prices available to larger firms and stable pricing from year to year, as well as tax credits up to 50% of the company's health care costs.

- **Dr. Johnetta Craig**, Chief Medical Officer at Family Care Health Clinic, where she cares for an increasing number of uninsured patients from all walks of life.

The House-approved health care bill will provide security for individuals, families and small businesses. If you are happy with your coverage or doctor, you can keep it. If you don't have - or you lose - your insurance, the Health Insurance Exchange will provide one-stop comparison shopping, and affordability credits to help Americans purchase insurance.

"At the end of the day, this is not about the partisan bickering and heated rhetoric that has surrounded this legislation," Carnahan said. **"It is about real people who are struggling to get by. We must act now to help them."**

Impact of Affordable Health Care for America Act on Missouri:

- Improve employer-based coverage for 3,657,000 Missouri residents.
- Provide credits to help pay for coverage for up to 1,549,000 Missouri households.
- Improve Medicare for 969,000 Missouri beneficiaries, including closing the prescription drug donut hole for 96,400 seniors.
- Allow 150,700 Missouri small businesses to obtain affordable health care coverage and provide tax credits to help reduce health insurance costs for up to 135,900 small businesses.

- Provide coverage for 453,000 uninsured Missourians.
- Protect up to 11,900 Missouri families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs.

- Reduce the cost of uncompensated care for hospitals and health care providers by $1,545,000.

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